

# A year of growth SEHC Annual Report 2009

### SEHC AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

THIS YEAR the board of SEHC has addressed its nature as a co-operative – how a co-operative is a unique form of organisation and the centrality of membership engagement.

A co-operative has an ongoing need to engage its members. Without this ongoing engagement the commitment of members to the co-operative weakens.

The basis for this connection is the purpose of a co-operative – member use, benefit and control. The Rules of the co-operative provide the framework for member economic and political participation.

The viability of a co-operative is critically dependent on the economic and political participation of its members – not only using the services of the co-operative but also participating in controlling the co-operative. Because co-operatives are member-owned they require member participation to ensure member control. During 2008–09 the SEHC board has engaged members in two important ways.

The board has developed a new Strategic Plan 2009–12. In developing the strategic plan, the board had a choice of developing the plan with or without the membership. The board chose to develop the strategic plan with members. A general meeting of members was divided into four discussion groups led by board directors and members provided significant input to the development of the strategic plan in particular in the areas of communications, improved services and energy conservation. The board subsequently finalised the plan and will now submit this to the members at the AGM for approval.

The previous Strategic Plan 2006–09 was developed and adopted by the board without reference to the members. The board decision to involve members in the Strategic Plan 2009–12 is a practical expression of member engagement.

This year's AGM will also decide on whether or not to change rules of the co-operative. The most important rule changes proposed concern active membership provisions. While co-operative legislation requires that the members of a co-operative are active, a co-operative's own sustainability and its future as a co-operative does require active membership.

The board is proposing to strengthen active membership in the co-operative by addressing the primary activity of the co-operative,

the nature of membership in the co-operative and what influences active membership. If the active membership changes are accepted:

- (a) New tenants will serve a probationary period before they can apply for membership.
- (b) New tenants will be required to undertake a co-operative education and training program.
- (c) Co-operative education and training workshops will be offered to all members.
- (d) Active membership will be broadened to include remaining a tenant in good standing as well as participation in meetings.
- (e) Legitimate apologies for not attending meetings will meet active membership requirements.

The board challenge to members is to revisit active membership for the first time significantly since SEHC was formed. Members will have the opportunity to support, amend or oppose these and other proposed rule changes. Whatever the members decide, that the board has sought a debate and decision on these rule changes is important – for the board, the members and the co-operative.

**David Griffiths** 

## **MEMBER SURVEY**

IN JUNE 2009 SEHC surveyed the membership to establish their satisfaction and comments about the organisation.

SEHC used the survey as a way of continuously improving services. The figures below represent the percentage of responses which are in agreement with each statement.

#### WHAT DOES THE CO-OPERATIVE DO WELL?

	***********	######################################
	77.5%	Provide quality housing
	92.5%	Provide affordable housing
	72.5%	Provide housing in accessible locations
	9.2%	Provide for participation in the affairs of the organisation
	67.5%	Provide responsive service
	67.5%	Provide quality maintenance services

# IN WHAT AREAS COULD THE CO-OPERATIVE DO BETTER?

**********	***************************************
32.5%	Application for housing process
15.0%	Taking possession of the propert
15.0%	Rent payment
52.5%	Maintenance
25.0%	Communication
15.0%	Responsive service delivery
	15.0% 15.0% 52.5% 25.0%

# HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR SATISFACTION WITH THE CO-OPERATIVI USING THE SCALE BELOW?

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7.5%	No response
0.0%	Low
15.0%	Satisfactory
12.5%	Needs improvement
65.0%	High

